

FIRE-RESCUE FACILITIES BOND ISSUE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
1ST FLOOR COMMISSION CHAMBERS, FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, 33301
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Board Members		Attendance – January thru December	
		Present	Absent
Thornie Jarrett, Chair	P	1	0
Douglas Meade, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Mark Booth	P	1	0
Patrick McTigue	P	1	0
Frederick Nesbitt	P	1	0
Douglas Ruth	A	0	1
Frank Snedaker	P	1	0
Charles Tatelbaum	P	1	0

Staff

Lee Feldman, City Manager
Alan Dodd, Deputy Public Works Director
Marlon Lobban, Senior Project Manager
Luisa Fernanda Arbeláez, Project Manager II
Ryan Henderson, Assistant to the City Manager
Robert Hoecherl, Fire Chief
Chantal Botting, Deputy Fire Chief
Mona Laventure, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

I. Call to Order

Chair Jarrett began the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

- **Roll Call**
- Roll was called, seven of eight were present, which constituted a quorum.

II. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- **November 3, 2016**

Motion was made by Mr. Tatelbaum, seconded by Mr. Snedaker, to approve the September 22, 2016, minutes, as amended. In a voice vote, the motion carried unanimously (7-0).

Mr. McTigue noted that his name was misspelled as McTeague on Page 2, in the paragraph above the Financial Report.

Chair Jarrett stated the Agenda will be adjusted so that the scheduled presentation could come first.

IV. Discussion of the Real Estate Market Regarding Fire Station 8

Ryan Nunes from CBRE introduced his firm as the City's real estate advisor for the last three years. City Staff requested an evaluation of alternative sites' potentials for Fire Station 8. The following is a brief overview of the market conditions and parameters seen as viable alternatives based on the criteria given.

- Last 24 months, in the area of FS8, only five parcels between 0.75 acres and 3 acres. Criteria included that it be approximately an acre. In this core area, there is a land scarcity issue. To find a vacant piece of land, or an easily demolished structure, is not an easy task.
- Average size of these sites was 1.5 acres and the average price was just under \$100/square foot. Some parcels were less; but some were very high, supported by the multi-family housing boom. Las Olas went for \$450/square foot. The closer to Federal Highway, the higher the prices tend to be.
- Based on City Staff's direction, geography that mirrors FS8 was examined, with a goal of plus or minus an acre, and completely neutral to zoning for this search. Six parcels were identified, in addition to two sent by City Staff for inclusion. Five of the first six parcels are currently for sale.
- On average, parcels were just over an acre and just under \$120/square foot. \$64 to \$150 per square foot is a broad dynamic.
- Most parcels are owned by LLCs, either developers or corporations with adjacent land and/or businesses, so there is a premium associated with those. For downtown parcels of this size, multi-family has been the highest and best use.

Mr. Tatelbaum asked if the parameters include both sides of Federal Highway. Mr. Nunes said they went to the far side of Federal Highway, north to the far side of Broward Blvd., west to SW 9th, and down through State Road 84, a geographic polygon across multiple search platforms to be thorough. Sites larger than the criteria were not considered as carving off an acre from a larger development would be very difficult.

Chair Jarrett expressed interest in the sites closer to the area that the station should be put, or plots 4, 5, and 6. Mr. Nunes summarized:

- Number 4 – This is one of the parcels that City Staff forwarded for consideration, about one-half acre, which may be too small for the stage and site. More due diligence is needed for the actual purchase price, but has been estimated at a little over \$1M.

- Number 5 – Also from City Staff, this one is on the market, but is just under one-half acre with the same challenges as Number 4. The price is aggressive for the size of the site.
- Number 6 – New to the market as of mid-January, it is currently a series of parking lots. At just over an acre, it is viable for the size range. It is also fairly aggressive in price and is just across from the new courthouse.

Chair Jarrett wondered if the information was gathered from MLS. Mr. Nunes said it was gathered from a combination of off-market knowledge of lots that are either for sale or could potentially be for sale, as well as a number of MLS systems they utilize to gain an understanding of what is actively being marketed. There is a potential for other off-market transactions, but requires due diligence and time and aggressive negotiations. There is a dearth of viable alternatives unless there is a willingness to pay what a multi-family developer would be willing to pay for the land.

Chair Jarrett asked Mr. Snedaker about the size considered on the last few sites, if it was around 30,000 square feet instead of an acre. Mr. Snedaker said that if the building was two stories, it was about half an acre, depending on circulation and location on the block.

Mr. Tatelbaum asked, with respect to the price, whether the City could take them by eminent domain as the use is for a fire station. Mr. Feldman answered, yes, eminent domain could be used, and explained the two types as used in the State of Florida:

- Quick take process: get an appraisal, put a fair price in escrow, and get title to property. In a trial a jury determines the value of the property, which then must be paid. Eminent domain in Florida requires paying all court costs for both sides, so it can be expensive.
- Slow take process: go through jury to determine the value, then option to buy or not buy.
- Both processes can take two-three years. The only way to proceed in this case would be on a quick take in order to get the station built.

Mr. Tatelbaum wondered about Number 6, where the property was just put on the market and the seller has unreasonable expectations for vacant lots not buildable for anything in that neighborhood, if the City got an appraisal substantially below that, would it be worthwhile for a quick take. Mr. Feldman said it would not be appraised as to the City's ultimate use, but for the highest and best use. Some discussion followed on the extensive criteria in getting appraisals for the right size parcels.

Mr. Booth inquired about the parcel size and pricing for current site on 1800 SW 1st Ave. Mr. Feldman said that was a property acquired in a land swap with Flagler Development. It was previously owned by FEC. The Wave maintenance facility was originally supposed to be across from City Hall, which was not the best location for such

a facility. Another site needed to be found, and the site that was swapped was large enough to accommodate both the Wave maintenance facility and FS8. The size of that site is just under an acre at 0.96.

Discussion ensued on the criteria of the smallest lot considered (Number 4 above), that it was inadequate for shift parking, as well as sufficient public parking. It could only accommodate a two-bay facility; and other factors.

Mr. Feldman reminded the Committee that the dollars slated for the construction of three stations, and the Commission has been told that if there is a shortage, the additional dollars can come from the general fund. Discussion ensued on market values, land swaps, and negotiation procedures. Mr. Feldman gave a history of the land swap on the current FS8 site; it was not a straight land-for-land swap, there was a cash component as well. Fire stations are general assets of the City, and the property cannot just be sold, however the value of half of the property might be valued at just over \$1M. Chair Jarrett suggested if a buyer could be found for that price, that money could go towards the purchase of one of the more expensive properties at a more ideal location. If the Committee would like to recommend the sale of the property and delay FS8 on the speculation of the market, it could be brought before the Commission in March. The nature of the Wave maintenance facility severely limits the use for that property and it may depress the price.

Mr. Snedaker commented that at the work shop general discussion, if appropriate property couldn't be found, FS8 could be continued in its current location with a future satellite station that would more specifically serve the underserved Rio Vista area. This option has not been investigated yet, but it could possibly make some of the smaller parcels ideal. Mr. Feldman explained the function of the Fire Department as fire suppression and EMR service. Since most of their business is on the EMR end (70/30), more modeling is needed for where those calls are most likely to be, how they would work, and fit into the zoning of neighborhoods. Discussion ensued about going that route and possibly a shorter time involved, as well as the pros and cons for each proposed fire station.

III. Staff Liaison Report

Mr. Dodd reported that he will be the interim liaison for several months as Mr. Acosta has resigned and has not yet been replaced.

- **Fire Station #54.** Currently out for bidding, bids will close on February 9th. A successful bid meeting with contractors has resulted in a wide range of contractors who will hopefully give very good prices. Contractor award is expected in April. After permitting, ground breaking should be one or two months later. Construction would extend into May 2018, with several more

months before operational. For the Committee's information, the site for FS54 is 0.89 acres. One of the requirements within the bid documents is that the contractor has to meet certain qualifications for how many government buildings they've done, including a fire station or something equivalent.

- **Fire Station #8.** Even though decisions are still going on about the land, the designer is refining the design permit, with 95% of the drawings nearly done. The IT portion has yet to be completed, specifically addressing speaker alert system, the BDA system, and the other communications needed. Regardless of where the station goes, this is all work that needs to be completed and can be site-adapted.
- **Fire Station #13.** Still working with FDEP in order to resolve issues with Antioch College. Mr. Feldman provided additional information. The original issue was regarding reverter rights on Birch State Park. Mr. Feldman ascertained from Antioch College that they really don't have any concern, but the College pointed out that they were in a sort of dispute with Antioch University as to who has the rights to the park should it ever be reverted. Antioch College met with Antioch University and they have no concerns with moving forward. In the meantime, while the FDEP had originally been in support of moving the station to the west, there is new leadership in that division and now, because of environmental surplus land issues, they have recommended that the moving of the site not occur. The lobbying team in Tallahassee has been engaged to start discussions with FDEP leadership instead of through the local park, with a firm decision needed by the end of March. Some discussion followed on the use of the temporary FS13 building, before and after the permanent station is built.

V. Communication to the City Commission

Mr. Tatelbaum wondered if CBRE's involvement with the project has ended, perhaps more creative, alternative solutions can be found. Chair Jarrett agreed that anyone could have sat with MLS and come up with that same report in short order, and that it is time to think out of the box. For instance, there was one project offered by a landscape architect for investigating the surrounding properties. Chair Jarrett learned from Chief Hoecherl that the union contract provides for additional parking in a fenced-in, secure enclosure for parking of personal vehicles, so it need not necessarily be on adjoining property. Discussion followed on zoning criteria for highest and best use, including a history of previously suggested locations that met with resistance as well as current consideration of off-market properties.

Chair Jarrett acknowledged the Commission's deadline of March 31st and there are still a couple more months to find a solution. Mr. McTigue suggested perhaps advertising in the paper for a piece of real estate within the desired area and see if someone might actually make a realistic offer. Some discussion followed and met with interest. Mr. Tatelbaum suggested a motion to request the City Manager or the Commission to consider, as expeditiously as possible, either placing an advertisement or simply

advising the Sun Sentinel to write an article to publicize what this Blue Ribbon Committee is doing and looking for available properties. Mr. Feldman said the legal process would have to be discussed. Mr. McTigue suggested opening up the flood gates on this matter, as Chair Jarrett agreed the Committee has failed the citizens that the fire station will serve in finding an ideal piece of land. Discussion followed on first the necessity of a motion, and then the wording of said motion.

Motion was made by Mr. Tatelbaum, seconded by Mr. Booth, that the City of Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue Facilities Bond Issue Blue Ribbon Committee urges the Fort Lauderdale City Commission and the Fort Lauderdale City Manager to immediately publicize the fact that the City of Fort Lauderdale is seeking to acquire property in the vicinity of downtown Fort Lauderdale for use in constructing a fire station. It was also resolved that the Fort Lauderdale City Commission and the Fort Lauderdale City Manager should consider the use of media advertisements releases or other forms of communication in order to promptly effect the dissemination of this information. In a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-2 as follows: Mr. Booth yes, Mr. McTigue yes, Mr. Nesbitt no, Mr. Snedaker yes, Mr. Tatelbaum yes, Mr. Meade no, Chair Jarrett yes.

Mr. Meade stated that he could argue both sides of this question, but if the station ended up here, that the Chief and the City and the City Manager, realizing that the City is growing and changing, would eventually put in EMS stations in other locations to cover and augment the fact of this location. Discussion and comments followed on the future of fire protection versus EMS services. Mr. Feldman shed light on the concept of fire impact fees, a fee that is charged for the purpose of increasing the capacity of a system to meet the capital needs triggered by new development. There has to be a rational nexus test, so some cities levy a fire impact fee as the city grows and more fire stations are needed. However, it has to all be tied to the impact of the growth. There are also impact fees for schools and parks. A discussion followed about allocation of the City budget and what comprises the general fund, and that it is all about balancing needs with the money available.

Chair Jarrett opened the floor for public comment. Frederic Stresau, landscape architect and resident of Rio Vista, summarized the immediate history the FS8 project as pertains to future growth and needs. He expressed his frustration that suitable property could have been purchased if the process had been more aggressive. A summary of a viable piece of property was given, including downtown location in the RAC and parking flexibility. Taking as many of the criteria for FS8 into consideration as possible, rudimentary architectural plans Mr. Stresau has developed appear to provide a reasonable option. Despite what the Union contract says, he felt the station should not be moved closer to the downtown and then the plans thrown out because of insufficient parking. Remote parking can be found elsewhere, just as other projects throughout the City have done, and Mr. Stresau thinks that can be done.

Discussion followed concerning the parking spaces issue, and the security of the parking area. Chair Jarrett asked Chief Hoecherl where the engine and manpower will

come from for the new stations. Chief Hoecherl said the rescue unit is from FS2, Unit 302, and the engine has yet to be determined. Chair Jarrett wondered if hazmat could not then be moved into FS2, as it is the central station. Chief Hoecherl does not believe the station is big enough to house the hazmat engine, as it is a selective response, and he explained how that works, primarily that the call volume has increased exponentially, and that the rescue unit is going to move. Some additional discussion on the logistics of a two-bay versus a three-bay station followed. Chair Jarrett asked Chief Hoecherl to look into the matter and ascertain what is needed to accommodate the hazmat team and how many bays are needed for proper coverage once the rescue units and engines are relocated. Chief Hoecherl said he doesn't think moving hazmat to the busiest firehouse in the City will solve the problem, right now moving them from the northwest part the City to central downtown is where most hazmat calls occur. Currently there is a 39+ minute response time for hazmat to the south end of the City. Central downtown is closer to the airport, Port Everglades, and most of the gas leaks and demands for services.

In other business, there was discussion on whether to hold the next meeting while waiting for more information to come in. Several agreed that it is the Committee's responsibility to meet and communicate to the Commission whatever the status of the processes put in motion may be.

VI. Adjournment – Next regular meeting February 23, 2017

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

[Transcribed by M. Moore, Prototype, Inc.]